The International Journal for

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THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL FOR THE EDUCATION OF THE BLIND, INC.

Chinese Braille

By Sister M. Francis Jogues*

Introduction

Chinese is a very complex, difficult language. Learning to read even for sighted Chinese has always been a hard, laborious task requiring good memory and much time-consuming writing and study. Few people among the teeming millions in the population learn to read. Even fewer become learned scholars in the language. For most of the peasantry and most women, the intricacies of the Chinese characters remained almost a complete mystery until very recent years. Girls' attendance at school was a novelty even in fairly large cities in the '20 s. This is one side of the picture.

On the other hand, for various reasons—economic, religious, and cultural—handicapped people, and particularly those congenitally so or those who became handicapped in early childhood, were, and sometimes still are not, too well accepted in in China. For this reason, as well as the general educational problem, little was done in regard to education of the blind except in rare individual cases. There was therefore no stimulus toward development of ways and means of translating Chinese into a media accessible to the blind.

Historical Background of the Development of Chinese Braille

The arrival of missionaries brought a change, a development of interest in the blind and all handicapped. For the most part, the early educational efforts of the missionaries were of a practical bent — teaching ways and means to prepare a blind child to earn a living (knitting, weaving, etc.)—but those working with the blind hoped and sought for a means of opening the world of books to them. From the limited amount of literature available, the credit for importing and adapting the Braille method to Chinese goes to different groups of Protestant missionaries who, from an indication in Miss Gordon-Cumming's book, were in the beginning working independently. She makes reference to a "graduate pupil" of one school going to another area to teach the Braille technique only to discover that they had developed one of their own.[2]

The first person mentioned in connection with this effort was Mr. (later Rev.) William Hill Murray, a Scotchman and zealous Presbyterian missionary who is erroneously described as blind in Gabriel Farrell's brochure THE BLIND IN ASIA, whereas his handicap was actually the loss of an arm while working as a youth in Scotland. After a period of dedicated mission work in Scotland, he volunteered to go to China as representative of the Scottish Bible Society. Upon his arrival, struck by the large number of blind people, he became greatly saddened at the thought that these people were not able to profit from the wonderful message of the Scriptures. As he travelled from place to place in his mission endeavors, the plight of the blind remained with him and he sought to work out a means whereby they might be able to "read" the Bible. Providence, he feels, brought about a chance stay with a fellow-Scotchman from Glasgow while he was travelling from one section of China to another. The gentle-

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EDITOR'S NOTE: Since few teachers in English-speaking countries understand the problems involved in supplying reading matter to the blind of other tongues, we feel that the space devoted to this study of Chinese Braille is well used.

Sister M. Francis Jogues (Fogarty), a New Yorker, is a member of the Maryknoll Sisters, an American Catholic Missionary Society which conducts schools, hospitals and other works in Asia, Africa and South America. Sister worked for five years in China. Two of these years, following expulsion from Communist China, were spent in Hong Kong where Sister began and conducted a primary school for Chinese refugee children. At present, Sister is concluding studies at Hunter College (New York) in Special Education preparatory to inaugurating an educational program for the blind in connection with Sisters' schools in Hong Kong.

man, a Dr. Dudgeon, had a young daughter who was blind. While Mr. Murray was staying with the family, a lady arrived from England with the special assignment of teaching the girl the then new method of reading for the blind using embossed dots. This was the system devised in the year 1834 by Louis Braille. Mr. Murray was much impressed by the idea, and from then on struggled to work out a means whereby Chinese might be represented in Braille. He finally developed a system which was practical, though it is not the one used today, and opened the first real school for the blind in Peking, China, in 1876.[2] Years afterwards, Mr. Murray learned that Dr. William Moon had antedated his own efforts by producing portions of Scripture in his own type in some of the South China dialects.[2] "In his work, Mr. Murray was assisted by Mrs. A. Graham, daughter of Bailie Alston, of Glasgow. This adaptation to Braille was of Northern Mandarin dialect. In 1910, the heads of the leading schools for the blind, in cooperation with the Bible Society, drew up the Union Mandarin System of Braille, which became standard all over China."[1 (p. 14)]

In the southern part of China, the dialects change greatly. Here, Dr. Mary West Niles pioneered in the development of Cantonese Braille, opening the famous Ming Sum School in Canton in 1889. Dr. Niles, a graduate of Elmira College, after receiving her medical degree from the College of the City of New York, went to China as a surgeon under the auspices of the Presbyterian Board. Disturbed by the sad plight of little Chinese (blind) girls, she came back to Boston for training and supplies, returned, and opened the school in Canton. As the pupils in her school did not know the Mandarin dialect, Dr. Niles had to put the Cantonese dialect into Braille. This she ingeniously did by reducing phonetically the many characters of the Cantonese dialect to 72 Braille symbols.

". . . Since then, schools increased until, according to last available reports, there were 30 schools with a possible enrollment of less than 3,000 pupils. The work for the blind in China was all conducted by voluntary efforts, chiefly on the part of missionaries. The Government was just becoming interested in the possibility of integrating schooling for the handicapped into its education system when war broke out. Later, work became largely disrupted through the evacuation of so many of the missionaries, although until the Bamboo Curtain closed down it was known that some of the larger schools were carrying on under native leadership."[1 (p. 14)]

No literature or other information was available on the development of Braille in the remaining seven of China's nine major dialects. While not presuming to say that nothing has been done, there would certainly be no danger of overstatement to conjecture that negligibly little has been done. The schools which existed in China barely scratched the surface of the problem in their own areas, much less could they hope to cope with the problem in the country at large. Adaptation of Braille requires a thorough knowledge of the dialect and would ordinarily follow the undertaking of work for the blind in the area requiring the Braille. Missionaries could not multiply themselves enough to reach all the sections in need of such schools.

The Chinese Language and the Development of Braille

To appreciate the adaptation of Braille to Chinese demands at least some understanding of the Chinese language. First of all, the *spoken* language is not one but many. The nine major dialects (containing many radically different sub-dialects) are so different from each other as to be unintelligible to a Chinese when he hears one other than his own. The official national language and main dialect of China is Mandarin of which there are many varieties but which are conveniently sub-

divided into Northern and Southern Mandarin. Along the eastern coastline and in the south (though never penetrating too far inland) are found the other dialects — Cantonese, Hakka, and the dialects of Swatow, Amoy (often linked with Swatonese), Foochow, Wenchow, Ning po and Wu.

Words in Chinese are of one syllable or occasionally two, so that the language has comparatively few words as we understand them. This paucity is augmented by the use of tones. The Mandarin dialect for example has four, the Hakka dialect six, the Cantonese dialect nine, and others have even more. By using say the six applicable tones of Cantonese to the word "tin," six slightly different inflections would result in six completely different words. These slightly different variations, often imperceptible to the untrained ear of foreigners, are such a part of the people's hearing habits that often, especially among the uneducated Chinese, one finds that the people cannot see the slightest similarity in what to us is the same sound with a slightly different inflection. This then was and is the basic problem of developing Chinese Braille. There is really no one type of Braille, but rather as many kinds as there are dialects, and even here requiring adaptations for local variations either in the Braille itself or in the student's training, as for example teaching them first the version of the dialect in which the Braille is written.

The even more complex written language of China, in itself, is for the blind in most respects no problem at all, for it is not phonetic but pictorial. At least it was so originally, but now having developed over thousands of years, it would take imagination to recognize unaided the pictorial elements in those few characters which retain them. What the blind do lose through inability to use the written language is its value as a common bond. Though the spoken dialect may change from place to place, the written language is the same everywhere—its grammatical construction being that of the Mandarin dialect. Thus a Cantonese could convey a message to a Hakka in writing though unable to understand the other's speech. The same books, newspapers, and so forth may be read in any part of the country. This, alas, is not possible for the blind. Apart from this, though, the inability to use the written language is no great loss as such for the blind, in fact, there has been much talk in China of eliminating or supplementing the difficult characters (different for each word) and adapting a method of the phonetic type, such as the Japanese and Koreans have done. The problem of tones here presents great difficulty, but this is a digression.

A problem which the lack of phonetic alphabet *did* present in the development of Braille was the understandable one of how to spell out the Chinese sounds even in one dialect. This spelling out or "romanization" of the Chinese sounds was a need first created when China opened its doors to foreigners. If Chinese writing was difficult to the native, it was even more so to the foreigner. Therefore, a medium of contact was needed for language study. This naturally began with individual efforts, which created a hodgepodge of spellings of Chinese. A Frenchman, a German, an Englishman (or American) did not use the same letters to "spell" the same sound. Where the French used "c" or "ue", the German used "k" or "ü" and the Englishman used "ck" and "yee". Apart from national differences, individuals, often erroneously, heard words differently and would thus spell them differently. The Chinese themselves, when trying to spell out the words of their language, often have spellings different again, not that they do not know the sound of their own language, but that they often do not know the full phonetic value of the alphabetical tools which they are using.

Dr. Murray, in his first efforts to discover a medium by which the Chinese

blind could be taught to read, faced these complex problems. Before "leaving Scotland, he had mastered Professor Melville Bell's System of Visible Speech for the instruction of the deaf. . . It occured to him that this might be adapted to the use of the blind, his first idea being to reduce all Chinese sounds to symbolic forms. He went so far as to have these made in clay and baked, so that they could be handled. From these, some blind pupils learned to read . . . But this method was cumbersome and unsatisfactory."[2 (p. 15)] Clay reading materials would also be dangerously fragile in the hands of young students.

"During his residence in Glasgow, his interest had been so deeply aroused by seeing blind persons reading by means of Moon's system of embossed alphabetical symbols, that he had set himself to master it. Now he ceaselessly revolved in his own mind whether it might be possible to adapt it to the bewildering intricacies of the non-alphabetic Chinese language, with all its perplexing "tones", which by almost inappreciable difference of pronunciation, cause one word to convey a dozen different meanings. But he soon realized that this system, which cannot represent musical notes, could never be satisfactorily adapted to the amazingly fine gradations of sound which prove so maddening to the foreigher who is learning Chinese."[2 (p. 15)]

After his stay with Dr. Dudgeon, Mr. Murray pondered ways and means of adapting the Braille system to Chinese. The Mandarin dialect, without alphabet, contained at least 408 sounds which needed to be represented. He finally devised a numeral system by which the Mandarin sounds could be represented by the Braille numbers 1-408. The students using clever mnemonic devices memorized the sound and its number symbol. Mr. Murray added five symbols for initial sounds as a convenience in distinguishing beginnings of words, 15 more to illustrate tones, and the remaining 33 for punctuation and musical notes. In this way, he utilized all the possibilities of the Braille cell. His method proved very successful in work for the blind. He even later adapted it by joining the embossed dots by simple ink lines to form a visible type, by which he hoped to overcome illiteracy in China. Unfortunately, there was no literature available to reveal why his method was not permanently adopted. Conjectures might be that the necessity for memorizing the 408 number symbols was a more difficult process than the methods later devised, and this is most likely or perhaps the idea just was not popularly accepted.

The details of the development of Dr. Niles' method were not given in the short brochure treatment of WORK FOR THE BLIND IN ASIA but, from the little given, it seems to have been nearer to the system now in use in China. The problem of spelling Chinese sounds was solved by using the symbols to represent sounds rather than letters. Even in teaching English Braille to her Chinese students, Sister Agnes, Principal of the Canossa School for the Blind in Hong Kong and herself Chinese, starts with the Grade II Braille. In a letter,[5] she relates that Cantonese Braille is formed phonetically by two types of symbols—initials (22) and finals (54). The Cantonese word is thus formed by the combination of one initial, one final, and a tone mark. Cantonese, apart from the greater number of tones, has also a larger number of words (800-900 vocables), but, like all Chinese words, many are composed of the same final with merely a change in the initial sound. Thus for example: the final (and also word) "ai" may become *f*ai, *k*ai, *n*ai, *s*ai, *w*ai, *ch*ai, *ts'*ai, *ng*ai, *h*ai, *l*ai, *b*ai, *d*ai, *sh*ai, *gw*ai, *g*ai, *m*ai, *p*ai, *t*ai, and *kw*ai.

The Union Mandarin System of Braille seems basically the same as the Cantonese in structure (which came first I don't know), except that some whole words, i.e., containing an initial consonant, are

also given separate symbols. Without a speaking knowledge of Mandarin, I cannot explain why, except perhaps that they are commonly used words and a Braille symbol was available in this dialect which has fewer sounds than the others.

Conclusion

The system worked out for the adptation of Braille to Mandarin and Cantonese seems to be a satisfactory one. The big problem in areas using this Braille is not the system, but a supply of books. Sister Agnes writes: "The greatest difficulty is that the children have to write their own textbooks, which requires a lot of time."[5] Expense is a big deterrent to providing Braillewriters, though several have been donated. Volunteer groups are helping out in the task of transcribing books.

"One of the bright spots in the development of the program in Formosa has been the Braille embossing plant set up and furnished by the American Foundation for Overseas Blind in Taipei. This service is under the direction of a committee composed almost exclusively of Taiwanese and former mainland Chinese, and two representatives of Western agencies. The press distributes a monthly magazine to more than 600 readers in two editions, Japanese and Mandarin, as well as embossing all the textbooks for both Government schools on Formosa. The Committee has undertaken what is believed to be the first Braille edition of THE BIBLE in Mandarin for the Chinese blind throughout the whole Far East area. Part of this project was underwritten through a contract for the Hong Kong Bible Society. With the exception of Japan, more Braille material is now available in Formosa than in any other area of the Pacific."[1 (pp.15, 16)]

Mr. Paul Langan, of the American Foundation for Overseas Blind, in an interview said that material has been planned for publication in the Cantonese dialect by this press. It is also hoped that soon there will be a means for embossing books right in Hong Kong for the needs of the Cantonese-speaking blind.

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INTERVIEW

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Education of the Blind in the U.S.S.R.

By Kingsley C. Dassanaike, Principal*

School for the Blind, Mt. Lavinia, Ceylon

Four weeks in the U.S.S.R. is quite a short time to learn much of that country, but having gone to that country as a leader of a team of teachers from Ceylon, I was fortunately able to gather a great deal about the educational system as obtaining in that country.

The National System of Education in the U.S.S.R. is very well organized and there does not seem to be any gaps. Every child is taught according to his needs, and his mind, hands, and heart are trained according to his own talents. There is an apparent scientific bias, but industry, agri-

*Editor's Note: We are deeply grateful to Mr. Dassanaike for this timely article, written at a time when the Western World is taking a critical look at its own educational programs, and comparing offerings and results with those of the Communistic countries of the East. Mr. Dassanaike is Chairman of the Standing Committee on Asia of the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind.

culture, medicine, and education all benefit by this same bias. The physical and aesthetic aspects of education are well provided for, and there appears a very pleasing coordination of work. All students have technical or practical education, and the training given in the technical workshops of schools is purposeful. The handwork turned out of metal, wood, cardboard, and other material is bought up by industrial factories. In fact, the school is expected to supply a factory a certain number of articles within a certain period.

By the time the student reaches his last year in school—that is the eleventh year or the eighth form—he knows what he will do for a living, and by the time he completes that year, he knows exactly where he will work, and will begin working immediately upon leaving school. This coordination between education and employment is certainly of a high degree.

Students who are to be engineers, medical people, teachers, lawyers, and the like, immediately go from the eighth form to the institutes of higher education for their professional studies. All schools in the U.S.S.R. are coeducational and children come to school at seven and leave at eighteen. The schools have no names but are identified by distinguishing numbers.

An organization called the Pioneer Movement grips the children in schools. Only children who attain a certain standard of efficiency can become members of the movement. It is an honour and privilege to be a Pioneer. Strict discipline, responsibility, sound mind, and leadership are the characteristics of this movement. There is an institution called *Pioneer Palace* in almost every big city. Here, boys and girls come from schools to spend two evenings of about two hours each week, and they are encouraged to study any particular subject of their choice, whether it be astronomy, engineering, music, art, physical education, international friendship, geology, and the like.

The education of the blind follows the same pattern, and forms an integral part of the National System of Education in the country. The schools for the blind come under the Ministry of Education, and there is an average of four schools in each republic of the U.S.S.R. It is common knowledge that there are fifteen republics in the U.S.S.R., and the total number of schools for the blind is sixty-four. There are at least 200 children in each school, and they are both resident and non-resident. As in the case of sighted children, they start to school at seven years of age, and remain in school for eleven years, following the same curriculum as for children in the regular schools.

The extra-curricular activities are well organized, as is the case in most well run schools for the blind in the world. Music and physical education are emphasized. While in school, children are directed to suitable technical training, and, before they leave school, they know exactly where they are to be employed. On account of the coordination between education and employment, there is no blind child who is unemployed on leaving school.

Students who need higher education are given one-and-a-half the stipends that sighted students get to follow courses in National Higher Education Institutes of the country. There is no special school for the blind for higher education. The information gathered revealed that there are now 400 blind students in the Higher Education Institutes of the Russian Federation only. This is saying a great deal because the Russian Federation is only one of the fifteen republics, though it certainly is the largest. There are three agricultural schools for the blind in this republic, and the University of Moscow boasts of twelve professors who are blind. In scientific institutes there are seventy scientific workers who are blind.

It was the writer's understanding that Russian Braille was used all through the U.S.S.R. It is to be noted that there are no contractions in Russian Braille. This

contributes to the fact that there are no shorthand-typists who are blind, although there are typists. At the moment, it is understood that an attempt is being made to produce contractions in Russian Braille. Neither is there a special school for training blind people in physiotherapy. Yet the blind have studied in physiotherapy institutions for the sighted, and the writer was informed that there are blind physiotherapists in 250 hospitals and in 8 sanatoria. There are special musical institutions for the blind for the higher study of music. As children come to school at age seven, there are no nursery schools for the blind. There were also no schools for blind children with additional handicaps.

The pattern of handwork in most schools for the blind in the U.S.S.R. is roughly as follows:

1st to 5th year of school: clay-work, paper-work, plastic-work, and micano.

6th form upwards: professional handwork, shoe boxes, book-binding, parts of apparatus, cloth zips, wooden handles, etc.

7th and 8th forms: work on lathes, turning, stamping, and cutting machines.

A Russian School Described

It might be interesting to refer to one of the schools visited by the writer. The one which is referred to was founded in 1882, and is situated in the old quarter of Moscow. Here are 200 children, 53 of whom held medals for excellent studies. This award for good work is a very important characteristic in all schools in the U.S.S.R. There are 19 classes in this particular school, and English was taught as a compulsory second language. The number of children in each class averaged 10, and among the several subjects were geography, biology, physics, natural history, and radio-technique. A large number of objects and teaching aids were used. These are normally termed "visual aids" in the U.S.S.R. These included stuffed animals such as lions, bears, reindeer, etc., an apparatus to find the level of water, and the voltage of an electric bulb by sound, and others.

A special subject taught in this school was typography, in which the blind children are taught to draw. There were special instruments for this, and the drawing is made on plastic mats, similar to geometry mats. By this process, blind children have been successful in "drawing" scenes from little stories.

The extra-curricular activities of the school were carried through in 13 circles, and among them were an orchestra of wind instruments, piano music, chess, handicrafts, radio-technique, and gymnastic clubs. An interesting event of the past year was an international physical culture contest with Poland, Hungary, Roumania, and Czechoslavakia, in which the Russian school emerged victor.

As in schools for sighted children, handwork is purposeful, supplying a local firm with a certain number of articles of a given specimen. In this school, the cardboard workshop had to produce 150,000 cardboard boxes for the year. Twenty-five per cent of the cost of these articles is credited to the individual savings accounts of the pupils.

There were 36 teachers in this school, and they have regular methodological studies. Many books are available in Russian on the teaching of various subjects to the blind. A teacher of the blind has to, in the first instance, follow the four-year course for teachers of normal schools, and then have a further year of specialized training for work in a school for the blind. These courses are held in the National Pedagogical Institutes where they are taught to know the child, to ascertain his capacity, and to elaborate the best method of teaching that child.

The Adult Blind

A few further notes on what happens after school may be of interest to the reader. On graduation, the blind person joins the Society of the Blind. Each of

the republics of the U.S.S.R. has a Society of the Blind, and the one in the Russian Federation counts 150,000 voluntary members. There are special workshops for the blind, but many blind people work in National corporations. They have employment in industrial production; produce small dynamos, transformers, parts of electrical apparatus, parts of agricultural machines, automobile parts, tools of various types; they work in turning, stamping, and cutting machine operations; prepare small motors; engage in piano-tuning; do leather work and are often employed in shoe factories; perform knitting and string bag-making operations; work at carpentry, as poultry keepers, and as managers of collective farms.

All blind people who desire to work are employed. Some do not work because they want to study in higher education, and others too old to work are looked after by their own people. All war-blinded people get a reasonable pension. Others are entitled to a state pension—in the case of women at the age of forty with ten years' service, and men at the age of fifty with fifteen years' service. But, they can continue to work even after they are entitled to receive a pension. This applies to all workers in the U.S.S.R. whether sighted or blind.

Space does not permit more to be written in an article of this nature. What is mentioned here will give a fair picture of the work for the blind in the U.S.S.R. It is heartening to know that the work there is well planned and purposeful. No system can be perfect, but those responsible in the U.S.S.R. for the education, training, and work of the blind are to be congratulated on what they have achieved, and perhaps many countries will learn from them.

Assignment Philippines

By S. C. Ashcroft, Ed.D., Coordinator

Preparation of Teachers of the Visually Limited, George Peabody College for Teachers

The Philippine Bureau of Public Schools requested the American Foundation for Overseas Blind, through its Far-East Regional Office in Manila, to provide assistance in appraising the status of the Philippine educational program for children who are blind. They also sought recommendations for the future development of the program. So it was that the writer undertook a ten-week assignment in the Philippines that resulted in a report and recommendations to the Bureau of Public Schools.

This study was concurrent with, but independent of, a study by the International Cooperation Agency (ICA, current name for the efforts formerly known as the Marshall Plan) which involved a broad, intensive, five-month survey of the general education program of the Philippines. The ICA utilized a team approach with American specialists and Filipino counterparts in various areas. Pairs of team members represented the areas of educational administration, finance, teacher-training, and elementary, secondary, and industrial arts education. No specific plans were made for the inclusion of special education except as it might be incidental to elementary education. It seemed expedient and mutually beneficial, therefore, for the writer and the study of education of children who

are blind to become associated with the ICA team and its study. The ICA team and the Bureau of Public schools welcomed this plan, and the Director of Special Education of the Philippines became the writer's counterpart.

Though the writer and the AFOB were committed solely to a study of educational services to blind children, it quickly became evident that the Administration of the Philippine Schools wanted a more broadly conceived study. They sought help with all aspects of their special education program. The mission therefore became tied to the total program of education for exceptional children and through the ICA study to the total program of general education. These seemed fortunate circumstances, since we believe so strongly that education for exceptional children is a part of, and not apart from, general education.

Ten weeks is a short time to devote to a study of this type. However, this period provided time to become acquainted with many aspects of the culture and the educational program it implements. We traversed almost 7,000 kilometers in twelve provinces by plane, train, bus, jeep, wagon, boat, and foot. We discussed mutual interests with such officials as the National Secretary of Education, the Philippine Director of Public Schools and his administrative assistants, provincial governors, directors of normal schools, and personnel at every level of the educational enterprise. The open doors, warm welcomes, and hearty hospitality at every turn reflect the Filipino interest in educational development, their affection for America and Americans, and their gratitude for American assistance.

The Filipino warmth of feeling toward America stems from many things. Such things are liberation from 333 years of Spanish domination; 50 years of benevolent rule under America; protection and liberation from the Japanese during the Pacific War; and their cherished independence granted in 1946.

The Filipinos are a curious blend resulting from Malayan ancestry, indigenous characteristics from pre-Magellan times, remnants of Spanish aculturation and Christianizing influence (they are 90 per cent Catholic, the only Christian Republic in the Orient) and the influence of and strong identification with the U.S. Western influences have made the Philippines a basically "occidental" country in a primarily "oriental" setting.

In spite of all the western influences that have impinged upon the deveopment of Philippine life, many cultural differences persist. Strong family customs remain. Basic values differ. The economy is largely agricultural, minimally industrial. The national language is Tagalog, but 87 native languages persist though only 5 are widely spread. English is spoken everywhere and is the official and business language. Spanish, "the other" official language, is widely spoken among the older generation. The people are multilingual.

These factors, a few of many that can be named, have an important bearing on the current status of general education, on the program for exceptional children, and, in particular, on the program for children who are blind. This fact became clear as we studied the Philipine education program.

Since 1907, the Philippine School for the Deaf and the Blind has stood as a symbol of the acknowledgement of the educational needs of exceptional children and the importance of making specialized educational provisions for handicapped children. For almost 50 years, interrupted only by the Pacific War, provisions have been made for some children. In its early years, the school served children from many provinces. As early as 1919, the precedent was set for the enrollment of blind children in regular public schools. The records state that "six blind children

from this school are now attending classes in Manila High School . . ."

Almost continuously throughout its history, the school has employed some personnel who had training or experience in American schools for the deaf and/or blind. Four of more than 30 teachers currently employed have had specialized training abroad. However, a significant factor quickly became apparent in our study. Nineteen teachers have had special training abroad, but unfortunately 15 of these people have moved into other positions. Training abroad gives increased professional status and opens job opportunities to the trainees, making it difficult or impossible for the special school to hold them. This and other facts led to the basic recommendation which grew out of the study. The recommendation was for the establishment and development of a national teacher education program for personnel in the education of exceptional children, starting with teachers of the blind. Up to the present, in lieu of study abroad, only summer courses have been available, and these only recently.

Factors other than the loss of teachers trained abroad led to this recommendation. It seems necessary and desirable to have a teacher-training program indigenous and related to the local culture. Training abroad tends to be geared to the needs of the country where it is offered. These needs are different in very significant ways from those of the Philippines e.g., principles of child growth and development to which our American programs are related are by no means universal. Our programs are aimed toward educating children to live in a largely urban, industrial, mobile-class society. We have a wealth of physical plant, equipment and educational materials unheard of in the Orient. We have a relative abundance of specialist-resource personnel to comprise a potential team-approach to our endeavor. The costs of training a single individual in our country could provide training for many more if utilized at home. These and other factors seemed to demand the development of a home program of teacher education in this specialized field. Leadership for this program could be trained abroad.

We have estimated that there are from 9,000 to 11,000 blind children of school age in the Philippines. These children are scattered throughout the fifty provinces of the Republic. We noted in our survey that only 57 children are currently enrolled at the school for the Deaf and the Blind. Ninety-seven per cent of the children enrolled live within fifty kilometers of the school. Problems of finding and identifying children, distance and transportation problems, and family and cultural customs made it manifestly impossible for the single special school, which currently does not provide full-time residence, to serve more than one-half of one per cent of the children who probably need the services. These factors lead to our second basic recommendation.

If any appreciable proportion of Philippine blind children are to have appropriate educational opportunities, a comprehensive plan including local day school programs and additional provincial special schools will have to be implemented. The annual per pupil cost of currently inadequate special school provisions is 450 pesos. By contrast, the annual per pupil expenditure in regular classes is 50 pesos per year. With the extremely poor economic conditions currently prevailing in the Philippines, the most logical recommendation for the immediate future is the implementation of a day school, resource-room plan. Our study suggests much promise in this approach when undergirded by the recommended teacher preparation program.

The Philippine Community School development, a unique innovation which many U.S. localities might well emulate, augers well for the success of the proposed day school program. The Philippine Community School is what prominent edu-

cators have come to regard as "one of the most significant landmarks in contemporary education history." While space does not permit detailed definition of this type of school, it is characterized briefly as being " . . . identified with, and intimately related to, the life of the community in which it is located . . . It is a community school . . . because it is a school of, by, and for the community." We hope our study has made a contribution to the development of a vision in the minds of the Filipino educator that the child who is blind can and should be an integral part of this important movement.

The third of many recommendations growing out of the study concerns educational materials. American educators often complain about the lack of educational materials and equipment available to programs for blind children. They would return form a trip to Asia with changed perceptions of their problem. It is not uncommon to find in the Philippine general education program a child-textbook ratio of 20 to 1. And, what texts are avaliable, are often found to be discarded American texts of very limited appropriateness for the Filipino child. The situation is even worse with regard to Braille and equipment for the program for the blind. A number of factors complicate the problem. Visualize a national, centralized educational program for a nation in which 87 native languages are used as the medium of instruction in the first three grades, while English is taught as a subject. In the fourth grade, the medium of instruction becomes English, and the national language, Tagalog, is taught as a subject. Money, presses, and authors are lacking for the needed materials. Imagine the problems of materials for the blind.

Fortunately, the ICA is vitally concerned about this problem in general education. Materials preparation centers are being set up, the first of which is already operating. It was natural for our mission to recommend that one of these centers be utilized for the production of Braille materials. Fortunately, too, a Tagalog Braille has been developed by an American-trained Filipino teacher. With some commodity aid and participant training, the Philippines can be enabled to cope with the materials problem.

It is hoped that recommendations growing out of the study, especially those cited herein, can be implemented very soon. Sound planning for local teacher preparation, the development of more localized educational programs, and the provision of educational materials and equipment should make it possible for many, many more blind children of the Philippines to receive the education they need.

The assignment in the Philippines for ten weeks provided a most fruitful and satisfying personal and professional growth experience. The study, culminating in a seventy-page report to be published later, demanded a critical exmination and appraisal of the cultural setting, the people involved, the assets and resources to be marshalled, and the liabilities and difficulties to be overcome. Time and circumstances will tell how well the challenge has been met.

Finally, it seems appropriate to stress again the feeling of Filipinos toward America and Americans. Many of them asked with glistening eyes to be remembered to old Americn friends; they asked how they could come to study here; they pleaded for opportunities and resources with which to improve their services to children who are blind. Every American program could make a significant, appreciated, and satisfying contribution by sending educational materials, equipment, and professional literature to the Philippine School for the Deaf and Blind, Mrs. Maria Francisco, Principal, Pasay City, Philippine Islands.

Guide to the Use of Optical Aids

By Gerald Fonda, M.D.*

There has been nothing basically new in optical aids since 1911, although there have been several misleading and premature announcements. These have been presented chiefly through non-professional media such as television, radio, newspapers, magazines, and the Voice of America. No ophthalmologist has ever betrayed the trust and prestige of medicine by this type of publicity. Optical aids are classified as spectacles, hand-magnifiers, and projection devices.

Optical aids in the form of spectacles seem to be preferred in approximately 90 per cent of patients, hand-magnifiers about 9 per cent, and a projection device in 1 per cent.

There are four indications for hand-magnifiers, namely:

1. For patients who have employed an inexpensive hand-magnifier for many years, and who are quite satisfied, but wish to see the new device recently publicized.

2. When it is difficult to decide whether or not it is worthwhile prescribing a lens in a spectacle.

3. A few people, senile in many cases, insist upon some assistance, and it seems more kind to suggest an inexpensive hand-magnifier than to imply that they are hopeless.

4. A hand-magnifier is sometimes useful as an auxiliary lens for occasionally reading small print.

Projection magnifiers are seldom found useful or practical. The same magnification and field of vision can be obtained by an inexpensive spectacle which can be carried easily in the patient's pocket.

The Most Frequently Useful Optical Aids for Distance and Near

I. Aids for Distance

A. *Conventional Glasses:* I have found that 20 per cent of patients can have their vision improved by a careful eye examination using ordinary glasses, e.g. such as a correction for severe nearsightedness.

B. *Non-optical Method:* High magnification can be achieved by approaching the object of regard. A magnification of two times is produced by advancing from 20 feet to 10 feet from the television set, a magnification of 10 times is produced by moving up to 2 feet from the set. This is the most flexible, convenient, and inexpensive method for producing magnification for distance, and it does not limit the field of vision.

C. *Telescopic Spectacles:* Telescopic spectacles are rarely of any value for distance. I have never seen the person who was made employable by the use of telescopic spectacles for distance. If the patient is not industrially blind, he is made so as soon as he wears telescopic spectacles, because a 2.2x telescopic spectacle restricts the field of vision to 14 degrees.

D. *Contact Lenses:* Contact lenses are useful for some eye diseases such as keratoconus.

II. Aids for Near Vision

Fortunately, most patients with limited vision request aid for close range, because more can be done at this distance.

A. *Strong Convex Lenses:* These are lenses similar to those people wear who have had their cataracts removed.

B. *Non-optical Method:* This is the method used by young people who can bring the print close to their eyes because

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of their youthful eyes, or by nearsighted people who read without their glasses.

C. *Telescopic Spectacles with a Reading Addition:* A telescopic unit for near use makes it possible to see at a greater distance from the eye than a strong convex lens producing equivalent magnification. In spite of this single advantage, telescopic units are seldom preferred to more simple magnification because of the other disadvantages of telescopic spectacles, such as constricted field of vision, expense, inconvenience, and objectionable appearance.

Unfortunately, most partially seeing people are made to see at close range by holding the print from one to four inches from their eyes. This seriously limits the range of work and makes reading laborious. Imagine reading one hour holding a book one inch from your eyes.

I have found that 80 per cent of all partially seeing people can be corrected by convential or strong convex lenses. The average cost of the low vision spectacles that I prescribe is less than $35.00.

Currently I know of no evidence which shows that the partially seeing have any more psychological problems than those with normal vision. Generally, a person with subnormal vision is psychologically no different from those with normal vision. This is especially true for people afflicted by congenital defects such as albinism, macular degeneration, cataracts, etc. It is sometimes a fact than an inadequate person is slow to accept his visual impairment and will not accept an optical aid which does not restore his visual capacities to normal.

Other than the degree of remaining vision, motivation and intelligence are the most important factors for rehabilitation. It is absolutely amazing to witness the accomplishments of some people whose vision is 3/200.

There are many people encouraged to read Braille whose residual vision is too good. I believe that it is a great disservice to teach a man Braille when he could read as fast or faster with an optical aid.

Many students are now attending sight-saving classes who could do as well or better in regular classes. I have assisted in the transfer of many students, not only from sight-saving, but from Braille, to regular classes. Such a promotion is a great boost, not only to the student, but also to his parents.

The recent recognition of the partially seeing who number over 250,000 in the United States calls for many changes in the teaching and training programs. A substitute for the term sight-saving seems to be a good starting point, as well as new criteria for the use of Braille or special assistance for the partially seeing. This new approach will call for close and understanding cooperation between the patient, family, instructors of the blind and partially seeing, nurse and ophthalmologist.

Bootstrap Pulling

By W. R. Powers, Houseparent

Iowa Braille and Sight Saving School

One of the many fine things which came from the AAIB convention in Ohio in June, 1956, was the first, as such, Institute for Houseparents of Visually Handicapped Children, ever to be set up in the United States for furthering the professional

growth of people in this field. Evolving from this institute, held at Washington University, St. Louis, Missouri, in the summer of 1957, was an outline for the promotion of houseparents' welfare, expressing their aims and purposes. While this outline was presented to one of the houseparents' workshops and printed on page 75 of the AAIB PROCEEDINGS of the 44th Biennial Convention at Vancouver, Washington, 1958, there is a need for an elaboration upon the points contained therein. It was recommended by one of the houseparents' groups at Vancouver that these aims and purposes as listed be printed in *The International Journal for the Education of the Blind* for the consideration of all houseparents and administrators. Following is an attempt to further promote the recommendations.

I. Promotion of Houseparents' Welfare

There are many different thoughts by administrators and governing boards on the importance of the role of houseparents. If this were not so, there would be no need for this article.

A. Educational Program. It is expected that any houseparent desiring to improve his status in a residential school would be required to promote his professional growth by participating in an educational program. There are two sides to the matter, however: what the administration would expect from the houseparent, and, by the same token, what the houseparent should be able to expect from the school once he has met the administration's requirements.

1. *Orientation Program for New Houseparents.* Most houseparents who come into the field, or even those who transfer from one school to another, cannot be expected to know the objectives of the school or the objectives of the dormitory without some orientation. First of all, they are engrossed in learning the identity of the children under their immediate care, becoming acquainted with the parents, and trying to follow the "order of the day." There are often extra duties assigned to one entering this field which the title of "houseparent" would not indicate. It would seem imperative that some program be set up to clarify the many questions which a new person in this field would undoubtedly have. Procedures vary with each school. With a good program, the "breaking-in period" should be greatly reduced.

2. *Opportunities.* It should be the responsibility of the administration to help to see that time and material are available to the houseparents for:

a. *Yearly Institutes.* It is not necessarily intended that each houseparent attend every institute. In fact, there are not always institutes scheduled every year, but it is hoped that through time there will be.

b. *College Courses.* Regular and special summer school courses and extension courses which would be beneficial to houseparents are available.

c. *In-Service Training.* A program of in-service training should be made available by the administration and should be attended by every houseparent in the school.

d. *Outside Reading Material* should be plentiful and readily available.

B. Rewards. These rewards should be forthcoming automatically once a houseparent has complied with the requirements set up under the educational program:

1. *Recognition by Certificate.* This certificate should be something to be displayed with pride and should help those in this field to gain recognition as semi-professional persons.

2. *Earned Pay Increases.* If a houseparent is interested enough in his or her

work to continue to attend workshops and institutes or to take advantage of any of the other available opportunities to promote his or her professional growth, then for each he should be recognized by an additional pay increase. The houseparents should know in advance that an automatic pay increase would be forthcoming upon the completion of these requirements.

3. *Self-respect.* Any one of the items under Educational Program and Rewards should help to increase one's self-respect.

II. Promotion of Improved Working Conditions

It is difficult to conceive of any one residential school having ideal working conditions. Here again, situations will vary considerably. The following items should be used to standardize, as much as possible, working conditions and pay scales:

A. Questionnaire to All Superintendents. This questionnaire, to be mailed out by the AAIB and to be filled out by the superintendents, should report as nearly as possible the existing conditions regardless of comparisons with other schools. The information from these questionnaires should be compiled, omitting the names, and sent to all participating superintendents. It should prove to be an important factor in obtaining necessary monies and convincing governing boards to raise their standards where their institutions fall short.

B. Information from Questionnaire to be used to promote, where needed:

1. *Clarification of Houseparent's Duties.* Some schools have bogged down houseparents with cooking, laundering, mending, and maid's duties to the point where the houseparent has little time to hear a child's problems, much less try to cope with them. Here again, self-respect can hardly be forthcoming for a houseparent who is merely a "domestic" with a title.

2. *Smaller Groups in Dormitories or Cottages.* In a large family, one usually finds that the older children help take care of the younger ones. However, in many dormitories one person is expected to take care of from 15 to 40 children where none of them is of an age to act as a big brother or sister. The younger the age group, the fewer children per houseparent should be the rule. An ideal dormitory of older boys or girls should be 12 or 15 in number.

3. *Better Relations with Teachers and Administrators.* The administrator must see that the houseparent gains self-respect through the program outlined if necessary, or better relations between the houseparents and teachers or administrator will fail.

4. *Improved Living Conditions.* In many residential schools, houseparents are required to live in the dormitories in order to carry out their duties. In many instances, the living area furnished by the school is the only home within 50 or 100 miles or more that the houseparent has. It should be adequate and pleasant and he should not be required to vacate it on his time off. Social activities and facilities for the teaching staff should also be made available to the houseparents in so far as possible.

5. *Adequate Time Off.* If a person is to be a capable and well-adjusted houseparent, and in condition to give his best, then he must be able to have time to be away from his work—to do some of the things he enjoys. To be a houseparent, it should not be necessary to sacrifice freedom, so to speak, and pleasures. The houseparent's time off should be his to do with as he chooses. He should not be expected to frequently utilize his free time for school activities.

6. *Pay Increase Where Salaries Not Now Adequate According to Work Load.* This is self-explanatory.

III. Administrators' Expectations

A. Houseparents' Participation in Educational Program. Houseparents should be interested in the educational program for their own advancement if they expect to stay in this field. Professional growth must come from within.

B. Improved Ability as Progressive Houseparents should be the final result of all the preceding program.

IV. Conclusion

A. The educational program plus the information gleaned from the questionnaire should give the administrator something concrete to present to his governing board to bring the above into effect.

At institutes and workshops, we have been told that we are very important in residential schools. We want to be better houseparents. We want to know how to guide our children better, not necessarily more easily. We want to be recognized and respected for our work with our children. We feel that the above "aims and purposes" will help us to accomplish these things.

Some Initial Experiences with Mentally Handicapped Children Who Are Attending Schools for the Blind

By Frank C. Budds*

In September of 1958, two classes for children who are mentally handicapped were initiated at the Michigan School for the Blind. One class is Primary, or "lower elementary." The other class was classified as "upper elementary." Children in the upper elementary class had chronological ages which ranged from eleven years through sixteen years. Their mental ages ranged from six years through twelve years. This class was an ungraded class. It is the ungraded class which will be discussed.

Excellent preparations for the above classes were established when the staff as a whole at the Michigan School for the Blind cooperatively determined the need for such a program. The staff agreed on objectives, conferred with parents, and obtained parents' consent to placement of their children in a special class for children who are mentally handicapped.

Criteria for placement in a special class were obtained from teacher recommendations, psychological testing, dormitory reports, and medical evaluations. Re-evaluations of every child were to be undertaken yearly, at least. The premise that a child can benefit from placement in a special class for those who are mentally handicapped is a basis for the screening process. Accordingly, children are transferred to and from a particular special class or classes in the regular school program. Respective decisions were administrative. Since the special room is for children in the educable mentally handicapped category, those children with prognoses of "custodial" were excluded at the end of the school year, with recommendations to their parents or guardians where additional assistance with respective problems might be obtained.

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TABLE I

Brain Injuries

Incidence	*Description*
1	Possible Laurence-Moon-Biedly Syndrome
1	Brain tumor with surgical exploration
1	Craniopharyngectomy
1	Slight Friedreich's Ataxia
2	Anoxia

The accompanying Tables are presented to the reader in an attempt to better illustrate the class under discussion. The information was obtained from records which were believed to be current. In Table IV, three Wechsler Intelligence Tests' results were unavailble at the writing of this paper. It may be of interest for the reader if he would compare the following tables with data from other such classes.

Table I lists the medical diagnoses of brain injuries which were encountered. The incidence was of sufficient magnitude to require the necessary adjustments when working with the brain-injured.

Table II presents a summary of hearing disabilities. Two individuals were extremely poor in travel, which may be due to combined impaired hearing, lack of travel vision, and mental handicap.

Table III is self-explanatory with the exception of the child with an eye diagnosis of retrobulbar neuritis. This person could read number symbols in fine print. Yet, the same individual floundered during attempts to read the alphabet and simplest of words.

Table IV presents a sketch which is somewhat typical of an average class of mentally handicapped children who are in a regular school setting. There is a rather wide difference between the lowest and highest scores. That the children have visual handicaps appears to have no effect on the verbal scores when compared with sighted children who are in classes for the mentally handicapped. The performance aspect of the intelligence test was eliminated because of lack of criteria about subjects who are blind.

Dearth of data prevents a satisfactory presentation of the extent of associated emotional and social problems. These were present, however. In fact, including

TABLE II

Hearing Disabilities

Incidence	*Description*
1	40% bilateral loss due to nerve deafness. This child uses amplification.
1	Mild loss in one ear, moderate in the other with conversational tones. This child has a severe high-frequency loss. Caution had to be exercised against Tinnitus.
1	Mild bilateral loss. Pathology to be determined.

TABLE III

Eye Diagnosis

Incidence	*Diagnosis*	*Amount of Vision*	*When Noticed*
2	Optic Atrophy, bilateral	L.P.	?
2	Retrolental Fibroplasia	L.P.	Congenital
1	Cataracts and Nystagmus	20/200	Congenital
1	Cataracts, Nystagmus, Ant. Synechiae, bilateral	L.P.	Congenital
1	Retrobulbar Neuritis	20/100	?
1	Amblyopia. Possibly Retinitis Pigmentosa	L.P.	Congenital
1	Esotropia due to Brain Tumor	Nil	at age nine
2	Buphthalmus and Corneal Leukoma	Gross Obj.	Congenital
1	Macular and Retinal Degeneration and Atrophy	L.P.	?

problems created by respective multiple handicaps, only three of eleven pupils had what may be termed satisfactory home situations. How the associated emotional and social problems affected the class and its curriculum should provide a rather interesting bit of research.

As mentioned earlier in this paper, prior to special class placement, all of the eleven pupils had previous experiences in classes for the visually handicapped. Three of the eleven had been excluded from school before special class placement. Two were excused for poor behavior. One was required to leave school because of fainting spells due to brain injury.

Educational goals for children with visual impairment and who are mentally handicapped approximate those goals involved in educating children who are mentally handicapped without visual impairments. The goals are objectives of self-realization, human relationship, economic efficiency, and home responsibility.

The objective of economic efficiency is a perplexing one for individuals who have multiple handicaps which include blindness. It appears that other handicaps become more dominant when associated with blindness. Thus, with children who have visual impairments and mental handicaps, a teacher has to be cognizant of the difficulties his pupils will encounter during post-school life. Possibilities to consider are sheltered workshops for the less severely handicapped and home care or custodial supervision for the more severe cases. Two of the eleven children openly discussed in class the possibility that, as they become older, custodial care in a state institution will become more likely. Both of these two children were incapable of self-support to any degree at that time. There is little chance that this condition will improve. To deny the possibility of custodial placement is folly. However, the teacher can do much to help all of his pupils and parents understand the residential custodial institution. Perhaps, as more communities become enlightened to needs for local facilities for those who have mental handicaps, the placement of children far away from home will diminish.

A curriculum which is practical for

sighted children who are mentally handicapped can be adapted to meet some of the educational needs and general program implementation for blind children who have mental handicaps. Considerable adaptation will be required in reading, writing, spelling, and arithmetic activities with children who can work with the Braille system. Braille is both intricate and complicated. Should a pupil who is mentally handicapped learn rudimentary Braille, the dearth of commercially prepared materials for the pre-adolescent and adolescent mentally handicapped pupil with no visual impediments adds to his quandary, especially when his teacher seeks classroom materials to adapt for specific needs.

Nine of the eleven pupils in the special class utilized Braille. The other two worked with large type print. Six of the children enjoyed the use of Brailled readers. One of the two partially sighted children enjoyed reading print. Three children found Braille too difficult. The other sighted child was the one mentioned earlier who could read finely printed number symbols, but who failed with some letters and simple words. The readers are asked to refer to Table IV for reading levels. The Ginn readers were most popular.

Writing skills were taught. Braillers and slates were used according to individual needs. Braillers were first choices for those pupils in initial stages of Brailling. Lift-top desks presented a problem for one youngster because he would forget that a Brailler was on top. A change of desks was the solution.

Spelling ranked high in interest and success. Approximately five words per pupil were assigned on Mondays from readers, arithmetic, or unit activities. Wednesdays were trial test days. Fridays were test days. Allowances were made for review and individual needs. Children were required to practice spelling

TABLE IV

Comparison of Intelligence Test Scores and Actual Academic Performances

Sex	*C.A.*	*Wechsler M.A.*	*Verbal I.Q. Test*	*Reading Grade*	*Braille Print*	*Arithmetic Grade*
F	12-0	8-11	74	2	B	1
F	12-10	5-10	45	2	P	1
M	13-4	7-7	63	2	B	1
F	13-6	***	**	2	B	2
M	13-6	***	**	2	B	2
F	13-8	8-6	62	4	B	3
M	14-1	9-3	66	Primer	B	1
F	15-0	9-8	69	4	B	2
M	15-5	***	**	2	B	1
F	15-10	9-2	58	4	B	3
M	16-0	12-0	75	Nil	P	3

their first names and family names when feasible. Spelling out complete names and addresses was a major undertaking for all pupils. Braille 1 and Braille 2 codes were practiced according to ability. Often, the children spelled orally.

Arithmetic activities included the use of cube boards with large size cubes, clocks, Braillers, slates, etc. The need for individual help in arithmetic was tremendous. Later in the school year, an attempt to initiate the children to arithmetic books was fairly successful. Four children used GROWTH IN ARITHMETIC, GRADE 3, in Braille. Six children worked with TWO BY TWO, GRADES 1 AND 2—five in Braille, one in print. One pupil used a teacher-prepared workbook at Grade 3 level in print. Everyday arithmetic experiences were stressed with great emphasis on concrete materials. Unit studies provided the most fruitful source of enrichment activities. For example, one of the finest arithmetic experiences of the class took place at a circus when refreshment purchases were made. The children figured what could be purchased with limited funds, and what change, if any, to expect.

Literature was no problem because it was presented to the children leisurely. The teacher read stories, poems, riddles, and comical sayings of interest to his pupils. Some of the stories were about family life, dogs, holidays, etc. Story telling students from Michigan State University visited the class bi-weekly. Talking Books were read by a few of the pupils. One of the pupils read two short stories in Braille.

The unit method of study was quite successful. Time for individual skills study was not sacrificed for unit study. In a like manner, unit study was not sacrificed for developing skills. Some of the unit study topics were:

Good citizenship in dormitories and at home
Our State of Michigan
Visit a faculty member's home
Visit a classmate's farm home
Party manners
Attending a show, circus, play, etc.
Selection and care of a pet
Holidays
Table manners
Fire drills, etc.
John Audubon and bird study
Gardening
Leisure-time activities

The unit on John Audubon and Bird Study was the result of an invitation from a regular elementary class in the same building to do a joint assembly program. The pupils in the class for the mentally handicapped did the biographical sketch on Audubon, and presented some fresh-frozen sparrows and cow-birds for all to see, and "Braille." The regular grade pupils presented descriptions of various birds with their calls and nests. Consultations and suggestions were given by the Lansing Audubon Society and Dr. Miles Pirnie of Michigan State University. The birds were obtained by a member of the Audubon group who had a suburban home with large windows into which ran birds at top speed. Sometimes the windows were closed. The frozen birds did nicely. During the assembly the wings thawed sufficiently to be opened. This is far superior to stuffed creatures.

The pupils in the class for the mentally handicapped took many bird study hikes on the school grounds and adjoining park. All of the children learned to identify at least one bird by its call. The children were delighted to listen for newcomers as spring progressed. Naturally, the children asked from where the birds are coming and to where they are going. Need more be said about the geography and social studies possibilities?

Sense-training was given whenever possible. The children were encouraged to handle things within socially accepted

codes of behavior. Sometimes these codes had to be spelled out. The names and locations of furnishings, doors, light switches, etc., were extended to the children. Discrimination of sizes, shapes, textures, and weights were taught. For example, the children got to know teacher's bald pate. There was some training in what to do with leisure time. This is a great problem with individuals who are mentally handicapped. Again, as in other areas, abilities, previous experiences, and home life are prime factors to be considered. The children were shown, as part of their academic program, how to use and share playground equipment, care of a pet (guinea pig), and gardening.

Music activities were mostly of the community sing variety. Two children were invited to sing during programs with regular grade children. Some pupils took instrumental music with a teacher who accepted their limitations. At times the children held their own talent shows in the classroom during a party. There were a few instances of rhythm band activity which were spontaneous; i.e. using different sizes of garden stakes while the teacher and one or two pupils worked at some particular planting project. Folk-dancing of the circle and square variety was attempted. It was found advisable to commence with dances which lend themselves to holding hands in circle formation.

One of the boys attended regular shop and caning classes. Three boys were unsuccessful at caning because of inability to grasp fundamentals. Two girls were attending a home economics class for slow pupils. Both children were quite successful. Next year's plans include a cooperative venture with the home economics teacher for all of the pupils in the class for the mentally handicapped.

Physical education was provided in the form of an integrated program, besides incidental activities in the special class. There were separate classes for boys and girls which included fifth and sixth graders. One of the eleven puipls attended gym class with seventh graders. This pupil was sixteen and had at least 20/100 uncorrected vision. Health classes were taught by the physical education staff.

The gym classes were large. The gym is a small, noisy room. Both physical education teachers remarked about the backwardness of the eleven pupils in gym classes. There were other suggestions that placement of mentally handicapped puipls in a large class of more able children is unsatisfactory.

The occupational therapy program was enjoyed by ten of eleven pupils in the class for the mentally handicapped. The one pupil who was not enrolled in O.T. worked in the laundry and grounds as part of a work experience program. O.T. provided gross and small muscle activities along with the other aspects of a well-rounded program. Groups were small with an average membership of four. The children attended O.T. twice per week.

Consultations regarding each of the eleven pupils in the class for those with mental handicaps were frequent for the teacher of the ungraded class. In order of frequency, conferences were held with houseparents, health center staff, dean of students, school principal, teaching staff, parents, psychologists, and the school's superintendent. On several occasions, authorities apart from the school were consulted by the special class teacher. Had the children been living at home, parent consultations would have substituted for houseparent conferences.

Evaluation of educational services for children who are blind and mentally handicapped has to consider lack of information in this recent endeavor. Evaluation should be included in the daily teacher-pupil activities as well as during periodic conferences with the whole class, staff, and parents. Evaluation efforts may be channeled into determination of each pupil's mental and physical growth, teacher

efforts, reporting to parents, and administrative policies.

The measurement of each pupil's physical and mental growth in the ungraded class involved review of previous performance in school and at home, the annual physical and psychological evaluations, and the above-mentioned conferences. Observations were made by the teacher, and recorded in anecdotal form as well as the more formal variety. Some observations were:

1. How the child's academic work compares with his performance during mental testing.
2. Development of coordination during activities which involved large and small muscles.
3. Presence of medical, physical, or mental conditions which may be corrected or minimized.
4. Travel abilities and limitations.
5. How the child plays with others, ability to care for himself, self-discipline, and ability to take and share responsibility.
6. The child's mental health: past, present, and future.

Teacher efforts should be evaluated, in part, according to practices which are generally accepted by others in the same work and teachers in general. Some criteria are:

1. Are the pupils engaged in purposeful work?
2. Do the children work individually and in groups?
3. Is the classroom organized to meet the needs of children with muliple handicaps?
4. Does the teacher have a class which is too small or too large for a diversified curriculum?
5. Is there a healthful emotional climate in the classroom? Do the children share their observations with the teacher? Is there an attitude of self-respect? Is there a relationship of acceptance as opposed to indifference?

Reporting to parents should be undertaken jointly by teachers and administrators. Reports should be as complete and simple as possible. Professional jargon can be misleading and confusing. All parents or guardians of the eleven pupils in the ungraded class were pleased with the five report-card type of letters per pupil which were sent during the school year. Children's grade levels of work and respective marks were included with social maturity marks and teachers' comments.

Because of the distances between school and homes, parent-teacher conferences were too few. Yet, all parents, guardians, and houseparents of children in the ungraded class were quite pleased with this first year's experience with a special class for children with visual impairments who are mentally handicapped. All inquired about future planning for these children, and what services were available from the State of Michigan. Thus, the teacher is required to keep abreast of such services. The school administration has been of considerable assistance in this matter.

Administrative policies have much to do with the success of an ungraded class, as well as any new venture in special education. In this case, administrative support made the ungraded class a reality. A new service was offered. A large room in the secondary part of the school building was assigned to the ungraded class. It was felt, and rightly so, that adolescent children with mental handicaps should have proximity to other adolescent children in school. Administrators are pressured by parents and teachers for more facilities on one side; while on another side are budget-minded legislators, staff jealousies, and petty politics, which can be detrimental to the success of an untried academic venture with multiply handicapped children who are blind. Undoubtedly the reader is familiar with the often-voiced comment about, "Why should money and time be spent on mentally handicapped children when gifted children are being neglected?" To this, administrators must maintain a dignified stand. They should avoid letting the special class become a pawn in a game. In proving the net worth of a class for children who are mentally handicapped, the fact that children are being helped should be part of justifying the existence of such a class.

Mentally handicapped children in their peculiarly fascinating way are contributing to the improvement of our schools. Their parents and friends, realizing many unmet needs in schools, are pressuring and informing state legislators about the desirability of necessary improvements in financial support, facilities, staff, and alleviation of disastrous over-crowding. Horizons are expanding for those children who are mentally handicapped and visually impaired. Underlying this progressive change is a challenge to others to do accordingly.

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Variability Among Young Blind Children in Object Recognition

By Carson Y. Nolan, Director, Educational Research

and

June E. Morris, Educational Research Assistant

American Printing House for the Blind

Introduction

Frequent comment has been made[2, 4] on the lack of psychological tests suitable for use with very young blind children. Most psychological tests designed for preschool and primary grade sighted children require verbal skills and breadth of experience uncommon to young blind children or are expressed in a medium unsuitable for use with this group.

This is a report of a pilot study on object recognition among blind children in the nursery through first grades. Use of object recognition as a criterion for ability of blind children is not new[1, 3]. The purpose of the present study was to explore the usefulness of this medium for estimating the level of concept development of individuals within this group. Specifically, individual and grade differences in ability to recognize common household objects were studied. This study is part of a large scale program of research in Braille reading readiness previously described[5].

Procedure

Subjects: The 78 children from the Western Pennsylvania School for Blind Children used in the study fell in the following groups:

7 girls and 2 boys, ages 56-82 months, from the Junior Nursery.

11 girls and 10 boys, ages 67-111 months, from the Senior Nursery.

11 girls and 14 boys, ages 68-114 months, from the Kindergarten.

8 girls and 15 boys, ages 82-117 months, from the First Grade.

Any child within these grades who was considered to be a potential Braille reader was included in the group.

The Test: The test items consisted of

TABLE I

Descriptive Data for the Performance of Each Grade on the Object Recognition Test

Grade	*N*	*Mean Correct Responses*	*S.D.*
Junior Nursery	9	16.33	6.96
Senior Nursery	21	19.95	4.28
Kindergarten	25	23.32	2.82
First Grade	23	24.91	3.94
Total	78	*22.08*	*5.06*

30 objects commonly found in homes. An attempt was made to select common objects that would vary in degree of direct availability to young blind children. Objects, therefore, ranged from those commonly contacted on a daily basis to those that would require considerable exploration in order to obtain contact. The individual test items are listed in Table III.

Children were tested individually in a room obtained for this purpose. After rapport was established, they were told that the examiner was going to show them some things and that they were to name them if possible. Responses were recorded on a special answer sheet. Any response that indicated the child knew the identity of the object was scored as correct. The test score consisted of the total number of items correctly identified.

Results

The test scores for individuals appeared quite consistent as is indicated by a corrected split-half reliability of .87. Descriptive data for the four grades appear in Table I. A small, though regular increase in mean scores is seen with grade progression. Also variability within grades appears to diminish as the children reach higher grades. Results of analysis of variance of the group data revealed differences among grades that could have occurred only 1 in 1,000 times by chance alone. Differences between the means of the individual grades are presented in Table II. Tests of the differences between individual means reveal that four of these are satistically significant at the .02 level of confidence.

Item difficulty levels (proportion of children getting each item correct) are presented in Table III. Individual difficulties ranged from .12 — .99 with a median of .80. The extreme skewness of the distribution of item difficulties indicates that most items were too easy for the children. This condition would serve

TABLE II

Differences Between the Mean Correct Responses For the Several Grades

Grade	*Senior Nursery*	*Kindergarten*	*First Grade*
Junior Nursery	3.32	6.99*	8.58*
Senior Nursery		3.37*	4.96*
Kindergarten			1.59

*Significant at the .02 level of confidence.

TABLE III

Item Names and Difficulties for the 30 Test Items

Item	*Diff.*	*Item*	*Diff.*	*Item*	*Diff.*
1. Safety pin	.88	11. Key	.80	21. Sponge	.68
2. Comb	.99	12. Bev. opener	.55	22. Record	.96
3. Spoon	.99	13. Screw	.49	23. Envelope	.67
4. Cup	.82	14. Scissors	.95	24. Rope	.64
5. Button	.83	15. Spool	.73	25. Rubber band	.90
6. Salt Shaker	.45	16. Coin	.95	26. Jar Lid	.86
7. Knife (table)	.97	17. Match book	.72	27. Book	.97
8. Screw driver	.70	18. Nail file	.55	28 Bandaid	.37
9. Pencil	.97	19. Pliers	.62	29. Brush (tooth)	.96
10. Ashtray	.81	20. Funnel	.12	30. Cork	.19

to diminish inter-grade and inter-individual differences.

No mental age or I.Q. estimates were available for the children utilized in the study. Therefore, the relationships between these variables and test score could not be estimated. However, test score was correlated with chronological age resulting in a coefficient of .21. This statistic fails to meet requirements for significance at the .05 level of confidence.

Discussion

The results described above strongly support the feasibility of using object recognition as an estimate of concept development and experience level for young blind children. Not only were wide individual differences demonstrated among individuals, but also significant differences among grade groupings. The results demonstrated some of the problems in identifying individual objects of a varying degree of difficulty for blind children at various development levels.

On the basis of these findings, it is planned to continue test development on a much larger scale. A wide variety of objects will be tested as possible items for inclusion in the test. The goal is to organize these items into an age scale. In addition, the test will be validated against reading criteria and its relationships to currently available measures of abilities of young blind children determined.

Summary

Seventy-eight blind children in four grades ranging from nursery to first grade were administered a 30-item test requiring them to name small common objects. Significant differences in mean number of correct names were found among grades. There were wide individual differences in this abiilty among individuals in the same grade and test scores failed to correlate with chronological age. It was concluded that items of this type might serve effectively in estimating level of concept development for preschool and primary grade blind children.

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The President's Corner

By Miss Lois V. Cox, President
American Association of Instructors of the Blind

Educators at Work

Educators are busy people both summer and winter. If every member of the American Association of Instructors of the Blind could report his summer activities, I am sure that there would be about 500 who would report that they had attended the very profitable AAIB Convention at the Tennessee School for the Blind, many who would report taking summer courses or attending workshops at the colleges and universities of the United States and Canada, some who would report educational travel, some who would report AAIB committee work, some who would report AAIB workshop activities, and some who would report attendance at the AAWB Convention. Now everyone is busy with his job in a state department of education, public school program, residential school, or some agency concerned with the education of the visually handicapped. Best wishes for a successful year!

Since busy people can be counted on to do "just one more job" well, the AAIB will be looking to its members to carry on the activities of their workshops and committees along with their regular work. The Mathematics Workshop has set a good example by getting out its first letter to members immediately after the 1960 convention and by sending a copy of the letter to the President of the AAIB and to the Workshop Coordinator to keep them informed. I hope other groups will begin their activities promptly and let the President and Vice-president, Mr. J. M. Woolly, of the Arkansas School for the Blind, who serves as Workshop Coordinator, know their plans. The officers of the AAIB and the Executive Secretary are ready to help you. Let them know your problems. Their names and addresses are carried on the inside back cover of *The Journal.*

The cooperation of the members of the AAIB has been very gratifying. Many have offered to serve the Association in various capacities. Others have cheerfully accepted appointments and are working to make the AAIB an association which helps educators of visually handicapped children provide for the children the best education possible.

The AAIB is looking forward to the best convention in its history in 1962 in Miami Beach, Florida. The work done by its members during the 1960-1962 biennium can make this possible, for you are **Educators at Work.**

Changes in Superintendencies

Three changes have been made during the summer months in the superintendencies of residential schools for the blind, brought about by the retirement of two able administrators. Dr. W. G. Scarberry retired July 31 as Superintendent of the Ohio State School for the Blind in Columbus, and Dr. Eber L. Palmer retired May 12 as Superintendent of the New York State School for the Blind in Batavia.

Dr. Scarberry's vacated position was filled with the appointment of Donald W. Overbeay, former Superintendent of the Iowa Braille and Sight Saving School, and Immediate Past-President of AAIB. The new superintendent of the New York State School for the Blind is Leland C. Sanborn, a public school administrator of the city of Batavia until his appointment to the residential school post.

Mr. Overbeay's resigned position at the Iowa Braille and Sight Saving School has been filled by Lee A. Iverson, former Principal of the Department for the Blind in the Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind.

The only newcomer to our field is Leland Sanborn. Mr. Sanborn brings nineteen years of administrative experience with him to the New York school in Batavia. He served from 1951 to 1960 as Principal of the Batavia High School, preceded by ten years' experience as Principal at Frewsburg, N. Y. His educational background includes a Bachelor of Arts degree from Dartmouth College in 1933, and a Master of Arts degree from Syracuse University in 1936.

Throughout his long experience as a teacher and an administrator, "Lee," as he is known to his administrative associates and friends, has been very active in community and church affairs, serving as an officer and board member in civic clubs, charitable boards, and his church. At the same time, he has membership in numerous professional organizations which includes a life NEA membership.

Mr. Sanborn is married and has three daughters.

A Delegate's Report of the 1960 White House Conference

By Maurice Olsen, Executive Secretary
American Association of Instructors of the Blind

A White House Conference on Children and Youth has been held at 10-year intervals since the first one was called by President Theodore Roosevelt in 1909.

A major purpose of these conferences, in which citizens and their government collaborate, has been to assess on a regular basis the needs and conditions of children, so that they may have the opportunity to grow into healthy, happy adults and to take their places as responsible citizens.

The 1960 Conference on Children and Youth had as its theme: "To promote opportunities for children and youth to realize their full potential for a creative life in freedom and dignity."

At the call of President Eisenhower, more than 7,000 persons, representing many thousands of persons and organizations throughout the nation whose work and interests relate to the wholesome growth and development of our children, converged on Washington D. C., March 27 to April 1, 1960.

Several million people have taken part in this mammoth stock-taking of local, state, and national resources for meeting the needs of the past, and for measuring

the requirements of the future. This they have done through three cooperating units working with the President's National Committee: the Council of National Organizations on Children and Youth, the National Council of State Committees on Children and Youth, and the Federal Interdepartmental Committee on Children and Youth.

The American Association of Instructors of the Blind, as a member of the Council of National Organizations on Children and Youth, was invited to send two official delegates. D. W. Overbeay, President of the AAIB, appointed Dr. Francis M. Andrews, Superintendent of the Maryland School for the Blind, and Mr. Maurice Olsen, Executive Secretary of the AAIB, as the official AAIB delegates.

The Conference focused attention on concerns that are generally relevant to the current decade. Participants were assigned to 5 Concurrent Daily Themes Assemblies, to 18 Concurrent Daily Forums, and to 210 Concurrent Workgroups.

Handicapped Children and Youth

Most groups made certain basic recommendations for improving services to handicapped youngsters. These are recommendations for coordination of services, for more research, for more and better personnel, and for financial support.

Coordination:

The groups urged coordination of the work of all private and public agencies with common interests, at both the state and the local level. To avoid overlapping or duplication and to fill gaps in services, they recommended surveys of needs and existing services, cooperative planning and financing. One group particularly stressed "community-state-medical-educational" cooperation in developing programs for youngsters with multiple handicaps.

Noting "considerable ignorance" of what services are available, the groups also recommended information programs to make parents, physicians, and children's agencies aware of these services and how to obtain them.

Research:

Group recommendations called for intensified research into the causes and types of physical handicaps; methods of prevention, treatment, and teaching; and evaluation of new techniques, programs, and care facilities.

Personnel:

The groups' recommendations called for recruiting and training more professional personnel for services to all types of handicapped children.

For all types they urge: more school psychologists, special teachers, recreation workers, and more social workers to work with families. Many groups referred to special teachers for the handicapped as one of the greatest needs.

To recruit and train additional personnel, the groups recommended:

- Intensified efforts to inform high school, college, and graduate students of the career opportunities in the field of mental health and physical handicaps.
- Expansion of training facilities in the health and teaching fields, with emphasis on work for the handicapped.
- More postgraduate education.
- More training grants and in-service training facilities.
- Higher salaries and better working conditions, smaller caseloads.

Financing Services for the Handicapped:

"The principal deterrent to consistent service to all (handicapped) children is lack of money . . .," one group report declared.

Specific recommendations called for:

- Attention by "community health councils and other groups . . . to the best means of financing care for middle-income families (with) handicapped children . . . through insurance or other means. . ."

- Matching state-local funds.
- Matching Federal-state funds.

The groups urged expansion of facilities and programs of all kinds, as well as the development of new ones.

Facilities and Services for Physically Handicapped Children:

Many groups recommended the extension of crippled children's programs to types of handicaps not yet covered (this varies from state to state). They note the need especially for:

- More facilities for early diagnosis, including early recognition and prophylaxis of serious and cripping diseases.
- More diagnostic and treatment facilities.
- More in-patient facilities for severely handicapped children, particularly those with multiple handicaps.
- Better dental and medical care for handicapped children in foster homes and institutions.
- More transportation facilities to transport physically handicapped children to treatment centers.
- More and better counseling services to families, to help them accept and adjust to the handicapped child.
- More special school classes for physically handicapped children, with assistance to teachers by professional personnel, such as visiting teachers, counselors, school psychologists and medical consultants.
- More speech, occupational, and physical therapy services.
- Greater emphasis on early vocational planning, vocational rehabilitation and on sheltered workshops for those who cannot compete with normal young people in private industry.

At the same time that these groups were deliberating on recommendations concerning physically handicapped children, many other work groups discussed and made recommendations for many other areas of concern for children and youth.

Following the conference, it is hoped that the many delegates and organizations which were represented will assume leadership in their communities and fields of specialty to help bring about the kind of future for our children and youth which we all desire—a future which will hold, among other goals, peace and security, and ever-expanding opportunities for maximum growth, for self-fulfillment, and for personal happiness.

TO PUT IT BRIEFLY

News and Views from the Field

Journalistic adage: "Be brisk, be brief, be bright, be right!"

A Goal for Teachers of the Visually Handicapped

Since the term "special educational facilities for the visually handicapped" has been generally accepted, it is my purpose to state a few ideals and ideas of what the teacher of the visually handicapped should be like.

The teacher who makes it possible to put herself, to some extent at least, in the position of her pupils will understand the difficulties that confront a child with impaired vision. An understanding of their difficulties is essential if educational procedures are to be successfully carried out.

An enthusiastic and well-read teacher will help and inspire love of school. Guidance is necessary for the continued development of competent thinking. Sometimes children depend too much upon the teacher. She must help them through her own thinking, but must also teach them to think for themselves.

A teacher of blind children must be aware that self-confidence needs to be nourished. A compliment to a sensitive child helps him feel secure and at ease. Making mistakes is one way of learning. To scold a child for it destroys his con-

fidence in himself, so he is reluctant to try again.

Willingness to work hard, infinite tact and patience, an open mind toward new ideas, a cooperative spirit, and a sense of humor are all necessary for the teacher of blind children. She must be willing to apply herself and fortify herself with various methods to find the individual differences in each child and help that particular need with kindness and understanding.

Experience in learning and storing up factual material are useless unless the teacher has the power to inspire the pupils through an accumulated wealth of resourcefulness. Ingenuity and charm are the key to success if one is to undertake the important and worthwhile task of inspiring pupils to make the efforts necessary to reach their goal.

Few employments are more satisfying than teaching visually handicapped children.

Mrs. Clara MacKenzie, Teacher
Minnesota Braille and Sight Saving School

Using Experience Charts in Reading Readiness

For the past three years we have made extensive use of experience charts in our reading readiness program. We have been fortunate in having a first grade teacher who is skillful in the preparation of the charts and who makes imaginative use of them. She prepares them carefully, and each is preceded by a satisfying activity. It may be a field trip, it may be a sharing experience, it may be an elementary science activity, or it may be a simple party. The pupils are motivated to prepare the chart to help them remember the experience. They contribute the ideas and the words. But the teacher skillfully guides them. The result is a frequent use and repetition of those words that will soon be encountered in the preprimers and primers. These charts are "read" daily, and the children never seem to tire of them. They are illustrated by the children and are attractive and colorful.

Ten to fifteen charts are accumulated before the books are brought out. Frequent repetition of key words soon leads to dependable recognition of these words. When the books are begun, most of the children know such words as "look," "see," "come," "oh," etc.

We have had from two to four blind children integrated in this classroom in the past five years. During our first year with the attendant experimentation, we were concerned with the Braille child's tendency to scrub the page. As the resource teacher to a wide age-range of pupils, I was occupied with many duties and could not always stay with those children to guide their hands. The carry-over from the individual Braille lessons was apparently not adequate to keep the little fingers on the lines of Braille. It was after the inauguration of a more extensive use of the charts that we began to solve this problem.

As the charts were being composed, the teacher wrote the words on the chalk board. They were read over, altered, and improved until all were satisfied. The Braille children contributed ideas as frequently as the others. Then the story was copied on to a large sheet of paper and hung on the chart rack. Copies were immediately made in Braille for each blind child. Both the written and the Braille charts were illustrated. String or textured paper gave some kind of symbol that satisfied the blind child's desire for a "picture." I made the lines wide apart. By this time the little TOUCH AND TELL books had been made, and these children had had the advantage of working with them.

We seated the blind children at the end of each line of tables so that the classroom teacher could see them all at a glance and observe hand position when a Braille teacher was not in the room. We ran

into the problem of getting hands from one line to another. The blind children lagged behind. This was solved by tapping whenever a period was encountered. This also served to call attention to punctuation. Second grade teachers now remark with surprise that their pupils rarely forget the periods in their little written stories. This definite pause was enough time for the fingers to get to the next line. In time the tapping was discontinued. Amusingly, some of the sighted children had become so accustomed to the tap that they provided it themselves at their desks.

We no longer have trouble with scrubbing. The children are able to keep their place easily. This seems to be to be more of an accomplishment than for the sighted pupils. They have the teacher or another child beside the chart with a pointer to indicate each word as it is being said. The blind children are on their own.

By the time the class was beginning to be aware of similarity and duplication, the Braillers were also able to pick out the two "look"s or "come"s in the story.

The children never seem to tire of their stories. They take turns choosing the chart for a particular day and frequently clap with pleasure at the selection. The charts continue to be used after the reading circles are begun, but with much less frequency. New stories are occasionally added after some auspicious event. Other uses are made of the stories in the line of seatwork. A chart may be mimeographed and the lines cut apart. The children then paste them in the correct order on paper, matching the lines to the original chart. The blind children have their Brailled strips to tack to cork boards.

This is a relatively simple device, but one that has proved as helpful as any other procedure we have used to develop good Braille reading habits and an interest in reading that is carrying over into other areas and grade levels.

Ruth J. Bersch, Teacher
Spokane, Washington Schools

Improving Listening

After many years of teaching school, I have come to a conclusion that I am sure many others have. That conclusion is that many of our students get poor grades because they do not listen. Many teachers surely can bear out this statement. In most schools some students can partially make up for being inattentive by using their eyes to observe. In schools for the blind this is not true. Their learning is mostly done through their ears.

In the fall of 1958, we decided to try to find out how well people really did listen at the Alabama School for the Blind. We had never seen any results of tests on this subject and had no real plan to guide us in our efforts.

First, we talked with the high school teachers. We decided to use our senior class for our first test. There seemed to be some good reasons for using the seniors. It was a small group, and it was composed of both boys and girls. They were willing to try the experiment, and they had made good to excellent grades.

We agreed that we had to set up a plan of procedure, which we did, as follows:

Purpose of Test: To see if there is any relationship between grades of pupils and their listening ability.

First Step: Have hearing test made. Have visual acuity test made.

Second Step: Set up schedule for listening periods.

Third Step: Hold listening sessions.

Fourth Step: Test pupils.

Fifth Step: Summarize Tests.

Sixth Step: Compare grades with regular school grades.

The test showed that everyone had about normal hearing. There was not enough loss to cause any trouble.

The visual acuity showed two blind, two with 20/200, and one with 20/400 or worse. The students were all Braille students except one. He could read and write some Braille, but was in sight-saving classes.

It was decided to hold the testing periods every Tuesday night in the apartment of the Principal, for he was to conduct the test. There was to be ten minutes of just talk or gossip on topics of the day, so as to become relaxed. The Principal would read for ten minutes from a textbook that they were familiar with, from a magazine, or daily newspaper.

Immediately at the end of ten minutes the students were asked ten questions on what they had heard read.

The papers were graded immediately so that each question missed might be discussed. After the discussion, refreshments were served.

This program was carried on for twelve weeks, and a summary was made of all the grades. One student made all A's. Three students made B and better every time. One student made C+ and better. We knew enough about their school grades already to know that was about the way they ran in classwork. The one who made C+ and better did not do as well as he had done the last two years, but had reverted back to the average grade all through earlier years. This one was planning to marry as soon as possible after graduation and not try to go on to college. This might have been one reason for no more interest. The other four were going on to school. Two are in college now, and the other two are in trade schools.

The ones in college have readers and have stated that they were glad they had this experience before going to college. They thought maybe they were getting more from their readers.

Just this week, a second year high school girl came in to the office and stated she had made a poor grade in one of her subjects. She stated that her teacher had told her it was because she had not listened in class.

In the February 21, 1959 issue of *This Week Magazine*, there was an article entitled "Learn How to Listen" by Dr. Walter Stromer. Many of the statements in this article parallel my statements that poor test results of any nature can many times be attributed to poor listening habits.

We plan more studies on this subject next year in our school.

B. Q. Scruggs, Principal
Alabama School for the Blind

New Officers and Editors Named to the Journal Staff

During the AAIB Convention in Nashville in June, a meeting of the Board of Trustees of *The International Journal for the Education of the Blind* was held, and officers and editors were named to head the magazine for the biennium. A complete list of these can be found on the inside covers, front and back. No Editor-in-chief was named to replace V. R. Carter, who had resigned effective the day of the meeting, so he agreed to act as interim editor through the October issue, and until the Trustees can hold another meeting in Louisville during the Annual APHB Meeting the last week of October. Miss Marjorie Hooper will continue as Managing Editor of the magazine.

Byron Berhow, Superintendent of the Washington State School for the Blind, was named President of the magazine in the Nashville meeting, and as the first order of business, he instructed Miss Hooper and the newly elected Secretary-Treasurer, L. P. Howser, to draw up a budget based upon 32 page issues for October and December. The elected Associate Editors were organized into an executive board and held one meeting following the Trustee's meeting to approve assistant editors recommended by the Editor-in-chief, and to discuss problems relative to the routine operation of the magazine.

V. R. Carter, Editor
The International Journal for the Education of the Blind

The International Journal for

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